

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 10, 21-25 and 27-29 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Aikins et al U.S. Patent 5,690,260.

Claims 4-9, 11-20, 26, 30 and 31 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, with an indication that such claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this response, claims 4, 11, 26, 30 and 31 are amended to independent form, in each case incorporating the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the Examiner's indication, it is thus believed that claims 4, 11, 26, 30 and 31 are in allowable form, along with dependent claims 5-9 and 12-20.

The remaining claims have been amended in a manner believed to patentably define over the prior art.

The Aikins et al reference discloses a bicycle carrier having a tubular member 16 that fits within a hitch receiver 10. Tubular member 16 includes an aperture 18 that lines up with an aperture 12 in the receiver 10, to receive a pin 14. A cam or ramp member 22 is located within the interior of the tubular member 16, and includes a cam or ramp surface 24 that faces the opposite surface of the tubular member 16, which includes an opening 26. A cam follower 42 is positioned to engage cam surface 24, and is mounted to the end of a connector 36 that includes a turnbuckle assembly 36a. An outer end of the connector 36 is pivotably attached to a cross pin 40, which extends through an aperture 48 in post 46. Post 46 is received within an upstanding leg 16b, which is pivotable about a cross pin 34. With this construction, movement of post 46 to an upright position forces cam follower 42 into engagement with cam surface 24, and thereby engages cam follower 42 with the internal surface of hitch receiver 10 through opening 26. When support post 46 is pivoted away from the operative position, as shown in Fig. 5, cam follower 42 is moved out of engagement with the internal surface of hitch receiver 10, to disengage tubular member 16 from hitch receiver 10.

Claim 1 is amended to state that the mounting member defines a longitudinal axis and to state that the operating arrangement is carried by the mounting member. The operating arrangement is defined as including a manually rotatable input member secured to the mounting member for rotational movement about an axis of rotation generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the mounting member. The operating arrangement is further defined as including an actuator member connected between the input member and the engagement member. Claim 1 also states that manual rotation of the input member causes the actuator member to move the engagement member between the operative and inoperative positions.

Aikins et al contains no showing or suggestion of a rotatable input member as set forth in amended claim 1, which is rotatable about an axis of rotation generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the mounting member. Rather, Aikins et al discloses actuation of the cam follower by pivoting movement of the upright member between an operative position and an inoperative position.

In view of the failure of Aikins et al to show or suggest the subject matter of amended claim 1, it is believed that amended claim 1 patentably defines over Aikins et al. A review of the remaining references of record similarly fails to show or suggest the claimed subject matter, and accordingly claim 1 is believed allowable. Claims 2, 3 and 32 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, and are believed allowable for the above reasons as well as in view of the subject matter of each claim.

Claim 10 is amended to include a support member that extends upwardly from the mounting member. Claim 10 is also amended to specify that the step of moving the locking member in the second transverse direction is carried out by means of an actuator arrangement carried by the mounting member. The actuator arrangement is defined as being operable independently of the upwardly extending support member to cause movement of the locking member in the second transverse direction.

As noted previously, the Aikins et al reference discloses actuation of the cam follower by pivoting movement of the support post between operative and

inoperative positions. This is in direct contrast to the subject matter of amended claim 10, which states that the actuator arrangement is operable independently of the upwardly extending support member to cause movement of the locking member in the second transverse direction.

For the above reasons, claim 10 is believed to patentably define over the Aikins et al reference. A review of the remaining references of record similarly fails to show or suggest the claimed subject matter, and accordingly claim 10 is believed allowable.

Claims 33-36 depend directly or indirectly from claim 10, and are believed allowable for the above reasons as well as in view of the subject matter of each claim.

Claim 21 is amended to state that the engagement member is pivotable, and is carried by the mounting member. The engagement member is defined as being located within an interior defined by the mounting member. Claim 21 further calls for a transverse surface located within the interior of the mounting member. In addition, claim 21 states that the actuator is operable to pivot the engagement member between the operative and release positions. Pivoting of the engagement member from the release position to the operative position causes a first area of the engagement member to engage the transverse surface and a second area of the engagement member to extend into engagement with a surface defined by the receiver. When the engagement member is pivoted from the operative position to the release position, the transverse force applied to the hitch receiver is relieved.

The Aikins et al reference does not show or suggest the subject matter of amended claim 21. In Aikins et al, the cam follower 22 rides along cam surface 24 for lateral movement through the opening 26 into engagement with the inner surface of the hitch receiver 10. Aikins et al contains no showing or suggestion of an engagement member that is pivoted between the operative and release positions, as claimed.

For the above reasons, claim 21 is believed to patentably define over the Aikins et al reference. A review of the remaining references of record similarly fails to

show or suggest the claimed subject matter, and accordingly claim 21 is believed allowable.

Claims 22-25 depend directly or indirectly from claim 21, and are believed allowable for the above reasons as well as in view of the subject matter of each claim.

Claim 27 has been amended along the same lines as claim 1. For the reasons noted above with respect to claim 1, it is thus believed that claim 27 also patentably defines over the references, and is allowable. Claims 28 and 29 depend directly or indirectly from claim 27, and are thus also believed allowable for the above reasons as well as in view of the subject matter of each claim.

Applicant's attorney has made every effort to place the application into condition for allowance with claims 1-36, and such action is earnestly requested.

The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned by phone if questions remain after consideration of this response, or if such would otherwise facilitate prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

By



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